

**Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Community Focus Group: West Berkeley Neighborhood Development Corporation
Held at the Addison Street Community Room
Berkeley, California
May 19, 2008**

Question 1

1. Which of the following strategies should be a higher priority?	
A. Spending transportation funds to maintain the existing system of roads and the existing bus, rail and ferry services in the region	11
B. Spending transportation funds to build new roads and add more bus, rail and ferry services in the region	5

Comments:

I have an electric scooter and have difficulty getting around the streets that are poorly maintained; also I take public transportation and would like to see improvements – more space and more improvements to the existing transit system

It's a question of quality of life; it's also the small things that count – there will be an issue with future housing and expansion – you need a quality that can allow for safety and compensate for growth

The 194 billion won't adequately maintain the system, so it makes no sense to talk about growing the system

When you build new roads you end up putting people out of business and out of their homes – the money should be used to maintain services and build up the ferry system in the area – also help build up ridership and improve service (time) – if there is no public transportation, people aren't going to take it (he's kind of saying B as well here because he's suggesting adding more service)

It's a false dichotomy – each has multiple things – he doesn't want more roads, but wants other stuff – if we're not expanding now with more people coming, we'll be in trouble down the road – it's an impossible, not acceptable choice – we don't have the choice not to build more capacity (especially as an alternative)

There is a difference between US and Columbia – cities there have buses that run all the time – wants service expanded (not building new roads) – if you provide more service, more people will use it

I think I want part A & B as well – it's necessary to expand for more people in the future – but the systems need to be more efficient – more bus service; expand ferry services – need to look at how to make the system better (in terms of energy and efficiency) – utilize the systems to the fullest

I like 580 to the Richmond Bridge – so possibly prefer some new roads – wants to see upgrades to roads, but not necessarily building more roads

Question 2

2. How much of the \$30 billion dollar budget should be spent on maintaining local streets and roads, state highways, and public transit systems?	
A. Up to 25% (\$7.5 billion)	1
B. Up to 50% (\$15 billion)	6
C. Up to 75% (\$22.5 billion)	6
D. 100% (\$30 billion)	3

Comments:

B, wants to leave room for new programs for public transit and riders

C, talked about BART elevator services that are always out – also mentioned roads needing to be fixed, because she's trapped in her house (since she rides a scooter)

Doesn't like the roads and public transit being put together in this question. If there were public transit that was good, we would need less road maintenance (fewer cars on the road). She still chose C.

If we want to have ridership on public transit, it needs to be in good working order, clean – if we do anything to lower the amount of maintenance, there's no hope people will leave their cars for public transit

D, used BART as a model – their system has expanded, but they aren't maintained

Question 3

3. If you didn't spend all \$30 billion dollars on maintenance projects, where would you spend the rest of the funds?

Comments:

Expand ferry, rail, buses and bike paths

Expansion and improvement of the public transit that's there – lengthen the hours of BART – have buses go places they don't already go – make bikes more accessible (more bike trailers to SF) to places they can't go – look towards alternative energy sources (and don't lean too heavily on any one thing)

Sunday – reduced fares

Assist with getting bikes on and off transit

Security and safety initiatives

Question 4

4. Which of the following projects should be a higher investment priority for the region's transportation system?	
A. Spending transportation funds on the highway system to relieve traffic congestion, including ramp metering, high-occupancy toll lanes, etc.	4
B. Spending transportation funds on public transit options, including rail and buses to provide alternatives to driving	11
C. Spending transportation funds on walking paths and bicycle lanes to provide alternatives to driving	1

Comments:

A, people are in a hurry and like to go first – they'll pay and the fees will help the system

B, will help the current system and will help our earth that's in peril – would encourage us to be more earth conscious (less driving, gas prices would go down, use less gas)

Increasing public transit takes cars off the road

Would like to see the emphasis on convenient, cheap, fast public transportation

Chose this first (some participants preferred to rank rather than pick just one)

Chose this first, gets nervous with bikes on the road (don't pay attn to stop signs and red lights) – rail and buses will get cars off the road

More important to have buses or ferries – even if no bike lane, you could still bike

Chose C second – mentioned quality of life and walking; also mentioned the need to get away from hustle and bustle and take our time

Question 5

5. What's the one improvement that could be made to public transportation that would increase ridership?

Comments:

Monthly pass prices

Make the vehicles cleaner (the BART trains are filthy)

More cheap mass transit 24-hours a day (increased frequency)

Availability and cost effectiveness

Safety and security

Reduce fares (especially on BART) during non-peak hours (keep fares higher during peak hours but reduce during non-peak); also have one car that's totally for bikes – also for BART remove the seats and have all bikes and ONLY bikes in that car

Reliability – also have the managers ride their own system; that's how the systems will improve once they see what the problems are – also create incentives for better service and access (for the drivers)

Mentioned one bus every 45 minutes to Eastmont health clinic (lots of people going there) – need to increase service in specific areas to essential services (and big destinations with lots of people who go there and lots of people who have accessibility issues) – maybe even create some sort of focused paratransit

Make transit fun and pleasant

Drivers are forced to make the schedule (and there's no enforcement of the schedule either and picking up folks with accessibility issues takes time) – believes this is a management issue – the growing segment of society that's moving slower is running contrary to the need for the bus driver to make his schedule

Question 6

6. Which of the following should be a higher priority?	
A. Providing more transportation funds to communities that are planning to build more housing along BART and other public transit lines	6
B. Providing transportation funds evenly to communities regardless of where they are planning to build homes	9

Comments:

Likes encouraging better planning and encouraging people to take transit

Also feels this would be a good incentive for the developers

Mentioned being raised in a neighborhood, not a condo – her neighborhood was torn down to make way for one of these – she wants her neighborhood, not a condo, but still wants her neighborhood to be accessible

Are they tearing down existing houses to build these? What about communities where there is no BART or transit lines? And who is going to be able to buy these condos?

Everybody should have access to funding regardless for what they use it for

Question 7

7. Do you agree or disagree with this statement: “There should be a subsidy for low-income riders.”	
A. Strongly Agree	11
B. Agree	4
C. Neutral	1

D. Disagree	0
E. Strongly Disagree	0

Comments:

It's the Commission's job to make it more affordable for low-income – disabled, in particular

Young people paying to get into the system, but not paying to get out of the system – and getting arrested

In France, you buy your card based on your income (and your spending)

Question 8

8. Do you agree or disagree with this statement: <i>"I favor basing all transit fare subsidies on income rather than age or disability."</i>	
A. Strongly Agree	3
B. Agree	4
C. Neutral	5
D. Disagree	3
E. Strongly Disagree	1

Comment:

People with money don't ride transit

Question 9

9. Which of the following should be a higher priority?	
A. Reducing tailpipe emissions and encouraging alternatives to driving, such as public transit, bicycling, walking, etc.	9
B. Reducing traffic congestion and improving traffic flow to make it easier to drive around the Bay Area	6

Comments:

Doesn't necessarily feel A and B are mutually exclusive – money talks and if people have to pay for gas and pay because they're polluting, maybe they'll care

Agrees with B, but it's a huge project and the money allocated for this might not do as much as it could if it were used for other projects, so she picked A

It's not the transportation commission's responsibility to reduce emissions – congestion, however, is more under their purview – we will always have cars, but hopefully not always running on petrol

Picked this, but doesn't know whether it's possible

Cars do not give off a lot of emissions like they used to (issue is diesel trucks and ships)

Question 10

10. Which programs do you think are most effective to reduce the amount of emissions? (Select as many as you think will reduce emissions.)	
A. Subsidize purchase of newer/cleaner vehicles	13
B. Provide more/cheaper public transit	16
C. Develop awareness campaign to encourage people to reduce fossil fuel use	9
D. Build more bike paths and sidewalks	11
E. Funding incentives to cities to allow more development near transit	7
F. Support local traffic signal timing coordination	8

Comments:

Mentioned construction on the freeways as a congestion issue – need to time freeway maintenance projects better

Felt the development decisions are made on a much larger scale and individuals don't have any power over the larger regional decisions that affect them

Feels all of the choices have to be interconnected – and the cities have to be part of the planning of urban and suburban developments – they affect each other (and interfere with their transportation and housing issues)

Question 11

11. How much of the \$30 billion dollar budget should be spent on maintaining local streets and roads, state highways, and public transit systems?	
A. Up to 25% (\$7.5 billion)	1
B. Up to 50% (\$15 billion)	8

C. Up to 75% (\$22.5 billion)	5
D. 100% (\$30 billion)	2

Comments:

But then one person said she thought about it, but was influenced by what others said

One person also said he wanted to change his answer, but it makes no sense to expand a system when you can't keep the one you have going

Question 12

12. Thinking ahead to the year 2035, if you had \$30 billion, how much would you spend on each of the following projects to prepare for our regional transportation needs? To make it simpler, let's change the \$30 billion to \$30. Out of the \$30, please fill in the dollar amount you would spend for each area.	
A. Maintenance of existing roads and systems	\$220
B. Relief of traffic congestion	\$73
C. Provide transportation funds to cities that develop housing near transit	\$44
D. Provide access to public transit systems for all Bay Area residents	\$108
E. Reducing automobile emissions	\$41

Comments:

Need to take care of the bridges and the roads (otherwise you get what happened to the Cypress)

Question 13

13. Now that we've done the budget, would you favor pursuing new revenues to increase the funding?	
A. Yes	11
B. No	5

Question 14

14. Which of the following new revenue sources would you support? (Multiple answers are okay.)	
A. Regional gas fee	4
B. Higher bridge toll	1
C. Road tolls	5
D. Vehicle registration fees	2

E. County transportation sales taxes	4
F. Other new revenues	8
G. No new fees or increases	5

Comments:

Would pay this knowing that the money would go to improve the roads

Developers should pay for roads and transportation costs

But there should be a bigger allocation from the existing taxes dedicated to transportation

Would pay any or all of these taxes if she felt this money would go towards something she wanted (like an amazing public transit system that makes sense and is sustainable)

Level of service has deteriorated over the years in California; now we have more people and more people that require services, and strangely we don't have enough money; the tax burden was shifted (from rich people, companies and homeowners); let's restore the tax system we had before that worked (before Reagan)

Agreed with above statement – also pointed out that any sales tax is a tax on the poor – it hurts them – California is the only state in the union where oil companies don't pay taxes – only state where billionaires own yachts and get a tax rebate

COMMENTS SUBMITTED FROM AN INDIVIDUAL IN WRITING AFTER THE FOCUS GROUP:

MTC should stop wasting money on mailings.

Electric commuter line from Sacramento to San Jose

Need many low cost alternatives 24/7

Need BART owl service

Need to increase and improve the schedule of cross the Bay buses

Need a bike path across the Bay Bridge and the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge

Need a feeder bus service to BART

Make it easier to get from Marin to Richmond via mass transit

Need more ferries

He also mentioned casual commuters @ 6th and University Avenue, but it was unclear what his point was

And he mentioned bike car or BART, but again, it was unclear what his point was